THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

ROUND TABLE

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WOMAN'S COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

RACE TENSIONS

A Radio Discussion by E. FRANKLIN FRAZIER
CAREY MCWILLIAMS *and* ROBERT REDFIELD

Introduction by HOWARD W. ODUM

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Around the Round Table . . . .

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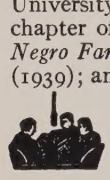

Carey McWilliams served as commissioner of immigration and housing for California from 1939 to 1943. He is a native of Colorado and graduated from the University of Southern California Law School in 1927. He is a prominent authority on race relations, especially among those groups of the western coastal area. He is the author of *Factories in the Field* (1939); *Ill Fares the Land* (1942); and *Brothers under the Skin* (1943).

Howard W. Odum, professor of sociology and head of the Institute for Research in Social Sciences at the University of North Carolina, received his A.B. degree at Emory College, his M.A. at the University of Mississippi, and his Ph.D. from Columbia University. He has taught at the University of Mississippi, Clark University, the University of Georgia, Emory University, and has been associated with the University of North Carolina since 1920. Professor Odum was a member of the President's Research Committee on Social Trends and has served in many capacities as adviser and participant in civic affairs in North Carolina and the South. He was chief of the social science division of Chicago's Century of Progress in 1933. He is a regular contributor to many learned and professional journals and the author of many books, among which are: *Social and Mental Traits of the Negro* (1910); *The Negro and His Songs* (1925); *Public Welfare and Social Work* (1926); *Wings on My Feet* (1929); *An American Epoch* (1930); *Southern Regions of the United States* (1936); *American Regionalism* (1938); *American Democracy Anew* (1940); and *Alabama Past and Future: The States at Work* (1941).

Robert Redfield, a member of the anthropology department of the University of Chicago, has been dean of the Division of Social Sciences of the University since 1934. Dean Redfield received his Ph.B., J.D., and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Chicago and has been associated with the University's anthropology department since 1927. He is a research associate of the Carnegie Institution of Washington in charge of ethnological and sociological field work and a member of the Social Science Research Council. Since 1930 Dean Redfield has done extended research and study in Yucatan and Guatemala. He is the author of *Tepoztlán: A Mexican Village* (with Alfonso Villa) (1930); *Chan Kom: A Maya Village* (1934); and *The Folk Culture of Yucatan* (1941).

RACE TENSIONS

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Broadcast from Raleigh, North Carolina

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Mr. Odum: I am very glad of the opportunity to introduce this discussion of "Race Tensions" as another important part of America's effort to understand the emergencies, the complexities, and the difficulties of our race problems as they become more intense in the war situation and in prospective post-war America.

There is needed, however, more than merely careful scientific inventory of the facts or a dramatic presentation of crisis and tragedy in the making. The first thing that I should like to emphasize over and over again is the fact that the South and the Negro are facing their greatest crisis since the early forties, a hundred years ago; and, by this same token, it is a supreme national crisis.

A second fundamental point of emphasis is that our problem of the Negro in America not only is a southern and national problem but is of the essence of a real problem of cultural progress. This makes it not only more important but more difficult.

The third thing that I would like to say is to urge with all possible earnestness that America, and the South in particular, declare a moratorium on all violence; on rumors that poison the public mind and inflame the emotions; on all political demagoguery; and on all treasonable inciting to race conflict, whether from good or evil motives. It should be repeated, again and again, that America now needs to exercise, as rarely in her history, maturity, wisdom, moderation, honesty, courage, and a strategy worthy of her rich heritage and of the demands of a new crisis. There is needed the hand of a double Walt Whitman—one whose sense of nature and organic

unity can portray crudeness and conflict in terms of esteem and affection for the people; and another whose sense is a democracy of the folk and the supreme spirit of America.

But, whatever else is needed, there is no longer time, place, or occasion for the immature blaming of somebody, or the calling of names, or bitter denunciation or smartness. Our situation has gone far beyond the point where the mere placing of blame has any essential merit in the larger crisis of meeting a great national need. We know that we all have been to blame. But it must be clear that the mistakes by one group do not justify greater mistakes by another and that foolish behavior by one group does not justify more foolish behavior by another group. What we need now is to move forward in the right direction, each group approximating the largest possible amount of cooperation with all the forces seeking to master the situation. In particular, there is need for the nation, and especially for the South, to esteem and to give full confidence to the great efforts of our best Negro leadership.

Our examination of the specific facts and the cumulative situation through which a great crisis has arisen shows us clearly that the heart of the problem and the crux of the crisis are found essentially in the complexity of the situation, in the power of conflicting forces, in the psychology and hysteria of war, and in the societal pressure which seeks to integrate all peoples in all areas into a common culture.

But our immediate problem here now is to covenant together for some new high morale on the part of all the people everywhere and for a master-strategy for the better ordering of race relations in the war and the post-war period. Can the American people come quickly to such grips with reality as to bring crisis and drama to happy ending?

Now, the ROUND TABLE from Chicago will discuss this important question of "Race Tensions."

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Broadcast from Chicago, Illinois

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MR. REDFIELD: Thank you, Mr. Odum, for your introduction that came to us from Raleigh, North Carolina.

Gentlemen, you will be interested to hear that when we at Chicago asked some of our radio ROUND TABLE listeners to advise us on this program, some of them wrote to say that the question was too dangerous to discuss at all. I wonder what you think of that?

MR. MCWILLIAMS: Our enemies have certainly not lost any time in going on the short-wave areas throughout the world with the story of what happened in Detroit and Beaumont and Los Angeles. If they are going to discuss our problems in this fashion, it seems to me that we might well give some attention to them here.

MR. FRAZIER: I would add something else to that. An objective, scientific study of social problems is quite different from newspaper reports and rumors. In fact, I would say an intelligent understanding of the situation is necessary for intelligent action.

MR. REDFIELD: Therefore, the justification for this discussion lies in part in the fact that we have both enemy versions which are false and domestic versions which are false or inaccurate to deal with. We must thus discuss the problem in the objective atmosphere of a university group.

MR. MCWILLIAMS: That is quite true. I noticed one instance of misrepresentation of fact as far as reporting is concerned. The recent troubles in Los Angeles were pictured as the result of alleged attacks by so-called "zoot suiters" on the armed forces, when, as a matter of fact, the riots were the result of the attacks by organized soldiers and sailors upon Mexicans and Negroes. According to

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Sergeant Eastlake, in *Time* magazine of July 5, the latter were outnumbered by some two hundred to one.[1]

MR. REDFIELD: You were yourself an eyewitness, were you not, McWilliams?

MR. MCWILLIAMS: Yes, I was at these disturbances in Los Angeles.

MR. REDFIELD: Then, gentlemen, if it appears that we are not getting a full account from our ordinary sources of information, we may proceed to discuss this question. I suppose that our first responsibility to the audience is to consider why the United States is today an area of race tension, for, I suppose, we must admit that it is. The events in Detroit, Beaumont, Texas, Los Angeles, and, indeed, all parts of the country show that there is more danger of conflict between the races today than there has been for many years.

MR. MCWILLIAMS: Let us find out first what minority groups we are talking about. I take it that we are discussing the so-called colored minorities in the United States. On that score I would like to suggest, by way of preliminary remark, the importance of these groups numerically. We have, I take it, some sixteen million colored minority groups in this country, in addition to perhaps five hundred thousand in our outlying territories and possessions.

MR. REDFIELD: Odum emphasized the Negroes, of which there are thirteen million. In addition to them, what groups have you in mind?

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[1] "On leave in Los Angeles, I had opportunity to investigate the zoot suit feud. . . . . I could find nothing to distinguish the behavior of our soldiers from the behavior of Nazi storm troop thugs that roved Berlin in mobs bent on beating up outnumbered non-Aryans. . . . .

"Los Angeles papers carried this typical headline: 'Zoot Suit Hoodlum Mobs Attack Service Men.' I saw nothing to justify this headline except circulation. I found the situation to be entirely the reverse. I found the zooter on most occasions outnumbered 200 to one, except in their enforced segregation districts . . . ." (letter written by S/Sgt. William D. Eastlake of Camp White, Oregon, to *Time* magazine, July 5, 1943).

COLORED MINORITY GROUPS IN THE UNITED STATES, 1940

Source: Carey McWilliams, *Brothers under the Skin* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1943).

MR. MCWILLIAMS: We have Indians, Mexicans, Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos, and other miscellaneous groups.

Mr. Frazier: It seems legitimate to me to make a differentiation between colored minorities and other minorities because of our traditional prejudices against people of high racial visibility in this country. I recall, for example, a case in New York in the 1860's, when white missionaries brought some converted Polynesians to this country and had difficulty in getting meals for them in public places. Because of this deep-rooted tradition, I think that we have come in America to divide people into two categories—white and colored. When we have spoken of the melting pot, we have excluded the dark ingredients.

Mr. McWilliams: There is a wealth of authoritative data on the social and living conditions which would certainly confirm that statement. For example, let us first consider health.

The facts indicate that infant mortality rates among American Indians are double the national average; that the tubercular rate in San Francisco's Chinatown is three times that of the rest of the city; that the highest death rates in New Mexico are in counties where 50 per cent or more of the population is Spanish-speaking; that the Negro death rate is some 32 per cent higher than the national average death rate; that the life-expectancy for the American Negro is some eleven years less than that for his fellow white citizen; and that the toll of daily sickness among American Negroes is some 43 per cent greater than the national average.

Mr. Redfield: You speak with regard to health. The facts are indeed eloquent. They are also eloquent in such a field as housing. I noticed that a Detroit housing commission in 1940 reported that at that time, while 17 per cent of white-occupied dwellings were substandard, 50 per cent of those occupied by Negroes were substandard. There was, therefore, no mere accident in the Detroit riot.

Similarly, I am informed that in San Francisco 81 per cent of the Chinese-occupied dwellings are substandard as compared with 19 per cent for the rest of the population.

Mr. McWilliams: How about education?

MR. FRAZIER: Despite the gains that have been made in recent years in the education of the Negro of the South, the situation is still pretty bad. At the present time seven million Negroes in the South have no library facilities. Then, let us think about this: Whereas 7 per cent of the whites have less than five years of schooling, 42 per cent of the Negroes have less than five years. When we consider appropriations, we find that in the South a white child has about forty-nine dollars spent on his education, whereas a Negro has only seventeen dollars.

MR. REDFIELD: That corresponding differential exists with reference to other minorities, of course. In the Southwest the Mexicans have less educational opportunity than the other people.

MR. MCWILLIAMS: That is true. Is there not also a political pattern of discrimination, as the agitation over the poll tax would indicate?

MR. REDFIELD: There is, indeed, and I am sure that you gentlemen are not forgetting the industrial front as well, because there it can hardly be said that the dark-skinned man has the same opportunity to work, or the same wealth of choice of jobs, as the white citizen.

MR. MCWILLIAMS: But there has been some improvement in the employment situation, has there not, as a result of the pressures for manpower occasioned by the war?[2]

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[2] "There has been a decrease of 36 per cent in Negro job seekers since January 1941 but a decrease of 48 per cent in white job seekers. Early in 1941 the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimated that between April 1941 and April 1942 approximately 1,400,000 additional workers would be required for the new war industries. Yet, during the third quarter of 1941, when placements through the U.S. Employment Service reached the highest peak, Negroes and other nonwhites composed only 3 per cent of the placements in 20 large war industries, and they were less than 3 per cent of the referrals for pre-employment training courses. They are at present about 1 per cent of the total in these pre-employment and refresher courses. In one city, until very recently, with two large shipbuilding concerns, there were nation-wide requests for shipyard workers, in spite of the fact that the U.S. Employment Service reported 6,000 Negro workers

MR. FRAZIER: Yes. For example, take Washington. There are more Negroes employed today in the government than ever before in the history of this country. Then, there have been increases, especially in the aircraft industry.

MR. MCWILLIAMS: We have discussed the pattern of this thing as it applies to the past. What new factors are there with respect to the present situation?

MR. REDFIELD: It seems to me that the first general statement to be made is that while the darker-skinned peoples are coming into new kinds of contact with the white-skinned people, and enjoying a certain degree of new opportunity, every advance in that direction carries with it the danger of a corresponding reaction. Because the old patterns are upset, there are new causes of conflict and even disorder.

MR. MCWILLIAMS: Don't you think that it is rather significant that the recent disturbances in Beaumont, Texas, Los Angeles, California, and Detroit, Michigan, occurred in defense areas—rapidly growing, mushroomed defense areas—where interracial groups are working together, traveling together, and seeking places of amusement together? I think that that is part of the situation. I believe that we can also conclude that prejudice is traveling in the United States.

MR. FRAZIER: When you speak of mobility, McWilliams, you have hit upon a good point. For example, one of the focal points of racial explosion today is on the busses. There you have numerous people traveling, and they have to learn a new etiquette of race relations or how to live together, I would say.

MR. MCWILLIAMS: Another new factor in the situation is the police problem. I was struck by the fact that the police report of

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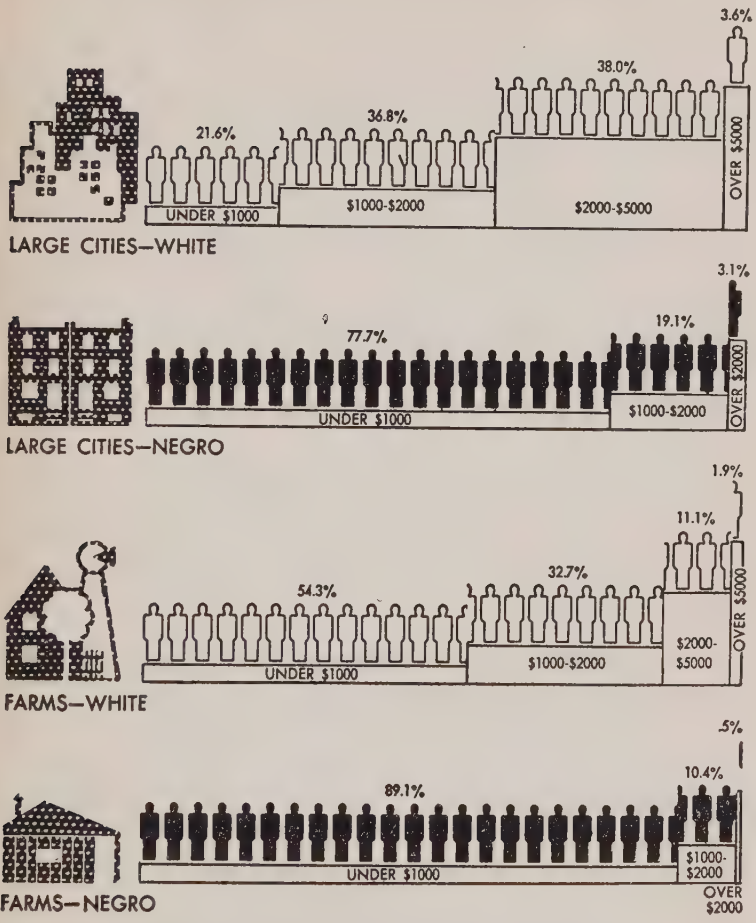
available in the active file of the Employment Service in that city . . . ." (Charles S. Johnson and Associates, *A Preliminary Report on the Survey of Racial Tension Areas*, for the Julius Rosenwald Fund, November, 1942).

INCOMES OF WHITE AND NEGRO FAMILIES IN THE SOUTH



Each symbol represents 4 per cent of all families in each group
LATEST AVAILABLE FIGURES, 1935-36

Courtesy Public Affairs Committee

From Public Affairs Committee, *The Negro and the War* ("Public Affairs Pamphlet," No. 71 [New York, 1942]).

the Detroit riots indicated that 85 per cent of those arrested were Negroes and also that 85 per cent of those killed were Negroes. This certainly would indicate a lack of equal enforcement of the law.

Mr. Frazier: On the other hand, I can cite a case from Washington. There was a rumor in Washington that there was going to be a riot and that the Negroes were going to rise up, as they called it, against the white people. This rumor was communicated to the chief of police. In fact, I helped to communicate that fact to him. He told me that there would be no riot. I did not know what his plans were, but on the night that Negroes were to march to a public square and protest against exclusion from employment on the busses and transportation system of the District of Columbia the chief of police led the march. There was no riot.

Mr. Redfield: That shows, indeed, what a little imagination and some courage can do.

Frazier, a few minutes ago you said something about the changing patterns of relations, especially between the Negro and the white in this country. You have been traveling recently in the country. What would you say would be the situation with relation to conventions of travel?

Mr. Frazier: I will give you an example. Recently I went South. On that trip I was able to eat my meals in various ways—ways which followed every conceivable plan and pattern of race relations. At first I ate in the Pullman car. The next morning I ate in the dining-car, with a curtain behind me. The next day I ate in a drawing-room. The third day I ate in the dining-room with white people. It seems that the dining-car waiters and the dining-car stewards have a sixth sense for determining exactly where it is possible, or rather I should say, safe, for a Negro to eat with white people in the South.

Mr. Redfield: At the same time that seems to me to yield the conclusion that the relations between the races which have been established are breaking down. If they are breaking down, not only

have we a danger but we also have an opportunity to do something constructive.

MR. MCWILLIAMS: There is still another new factor in the present situation. Our enemies have laid great stress upon racist doctrine. They have talked about master-races, and they are stirring up race hatred all over the world for the purpose of turning one race against another, one nation against another. The fact that they have done so has compelled us, as a nation, to emphasize ethnic democracy and to reaffirm our traditional position on racial matters.

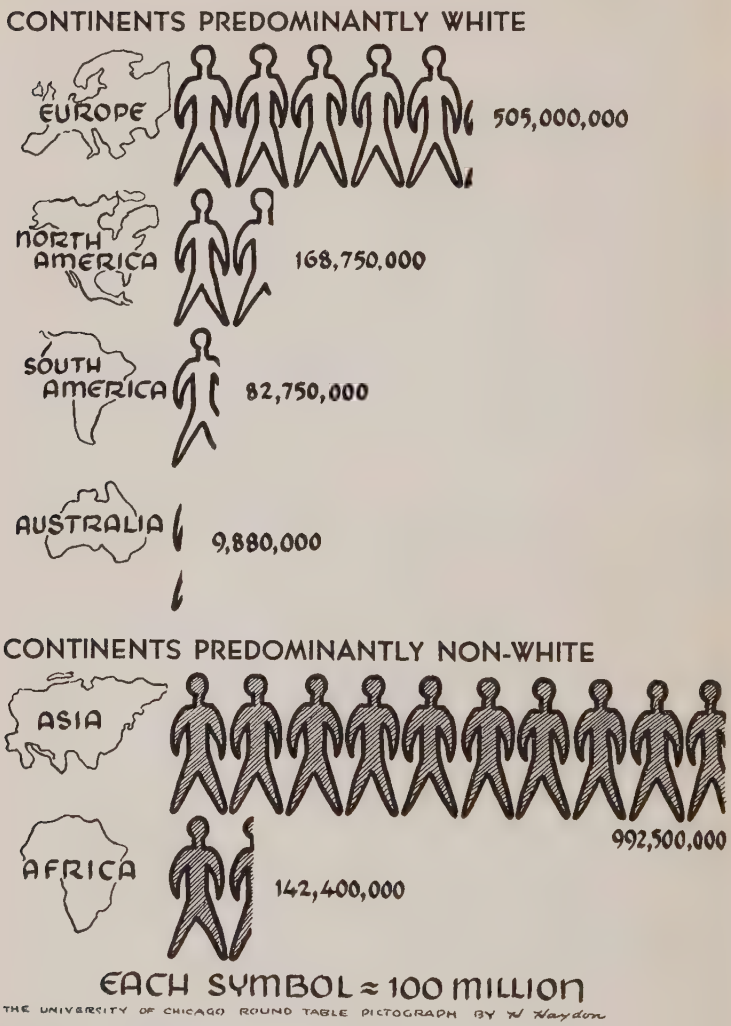
MR. REDFIELD: Indeed, war compels a redefinition of our ideals and our goals. We see more clearly than ever the conflict between the democratic country that we say we are and that we wish to be and the very incomplete democratic country that we actually act.

MR. MCWILLIAMS: Frazier, I would like to ask you what effect the announcement of the Four Freedom ideals has had upon the Negro population of this country?

MR. FRAZIER: When Redfield was talking about the effect of the announcement of the Four Freedoms, I was thinking of the effect upon colored people. It has made them more conscious of the discrepancy between our professed ideals and our practices. I might say that the colored people of this country, not only Negroes but other groups, are becoming internationally minded concerning the racial situation. In fact, the Negroes are beginning to identify themselves more and more with the darker peoples of the world. Recently there was a great mass demonstration in Harlem in which the Negroes were demanding freedom for India. This is something new in the history of the Negro in the United States.

MR. MCWILLIAMS: Quite true, and the Good Neighbor policy has had much the same effect upon our local resident Mexican population. They want to share a bit in the Good Neighbor policy here in the United States.

WORLD POPULATIONS, 1930



Source: McWilliams, *op. cit.*

Mr. Redfield: It is appropriate that we remember these things on this, the one hundred and sixty-seventh anniversary of the declaration that all men are created equal—a declaration we are still trying to realize.

Mr. McWilliams: We must recognize that, while our enemies are making use of racist doctrines for the purpose of creating division, our objective should be to achieve the maximum ethnic democracy and the maximum unity behind the war effort. That is why we here today should turn, at this time, it seems to me, to a discussion of ways and means of coping with this problem.

Mr. Frazier: Then, the first thing that we must face is the problem of segregation.

Mr. Redfield: You mean the established custom whereby the races are kept apart, even though they may be treated equally?

Mr. Frazier: Yes. There are people in this country who believe that the only possible way that white and colored people can live together is through a system of racial segregation and that this is here to stay.

Mr. McWilliams: Is that pattern of segregation uniform?

Mr. Frazier: No. We must remember that, after all, even in the South, white and colored people live together and work together. Therefore, segregation is simply not a working relationship but rather a method of symbolizing the inferior status of Negroes.

Mr. Redfield: But the question is whether that symbolization of inferior status is necessarily permanent in our country, or if it works well in our country. Do you think it works?

Mr. McWilliams: Frankly, I do not. It seems to me that segregation is impractical; it is costly; it breeds resentment; and it creates new problems.

Mr. Redfield: At the same time it seems to me that we must recognize that there are others who take different views. I have

friends in the South who agree with Mark Ethridge, who said that no power in the world could force the southern white people to the abandonment of the principle of social segregation.

MR. MCWILLIAMS: Just the fact that Mark Ethridge would make such a statement, it seems to me, dramatizes the necessity for approaching this entire problem with new vigor and new courage.

I would say, on the contrary, that there is an enormous wastage of manpower in the South; that there is constant friction; and that the existence of the pattern of segregation prevents the industrialization and the use of the reserves of the South, which in turn prevents the South from making its fullest contribution to the war effort.

There is one thing I would like to ask you, Redfield, as a scientist. Just how much merit do you think there is in the Nazi doctrines of race?

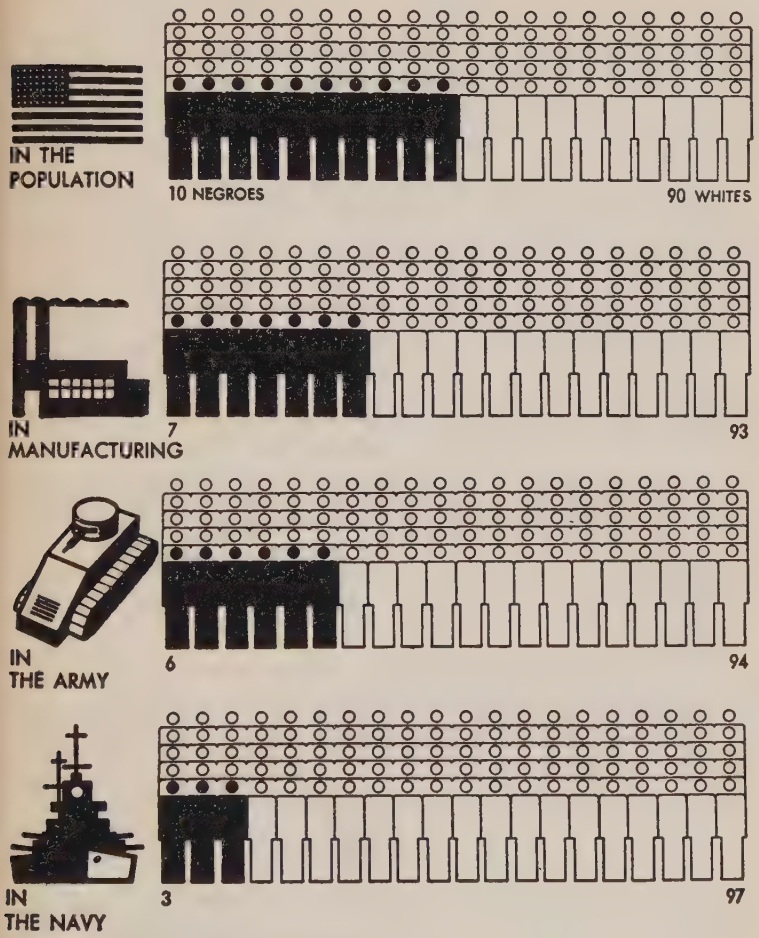
MR. REDFIELD: I think that I speak for the overwhelming majority of students of the matter when I say that there is no evidence that the races differ inherently in any ways which would justify a differential treatment among them. One might put it succinctly this way: There are no inferior races; there are only inferior opportunities.

MR. MCWILLIAMS: I agree with you. This talk about race is ethnically empty of sense and politically dangerous, because, after all, we must remember that we have red, yellow, black, and brown allies in this war and that we are making a great bid for world leadership. It seems to me that the impartiality of bombs with respect to race should convince us of the necessity of a fair treatment of all groups.

MR. REDFIELD: The policy of race discrimination, then, not only does not work but is wrong. It is inconsistent with what our democratic principles are. We cannot maintain our moral integrity while we declare the one and practice the other.

RATIO OF NEGROES AND WHITES, 1940

OUT OF EVERY 100



Source: Public Affairs Committee, *op. cit.*

Mr. Frazier: May I remind you in that connection that one of our allies, Brazil, with a proportionately larger Negro population than the United States, has no Negro problem or any other racial

problem. There are no racial tensions between whites and blacks or browns.[3]

MR. MCWILLIAMS: The same is true in Hawaii, I believe.

MR. REDFIELD: I agree with that. I wonder now if we are not ready to turn to the question as to what particular steps could be taken by the people of this country to bring about a better racial situation.

MR. FRAZIER: We can consider what can be done on two levels—the federal and the local. You, McWilliams, have argued for a national policy in your recent book, *Brothers under the Skin.*[4]

MR. MCWILLIAMS: That is right. I am a strong advocate of a firm federal policy for the simple reason that I believe that the very gains we have made in the spread of economic employment have brought us face to face with a situation where our social and political forms no longer square with economic realities. I believe, therefore, that we should reaffirm our federal policy of no discrimination in order to bring practice into alliance with preachment in this country.

MR. REDFIELD: But we have an affirmation of federal policy in the Declaration of Independence and in the Constitution of the United States.

MR. MCWILLIAMS: That is quite true, but it needs to be implemented, supplemented, and made more specific and reaffirmed at this time. There is a certain value in stating social goals, even though they may not be immediately realizable.

MR. REDFIELD: Because then our common ends are before us to guide us in action.

MR. MCWILLIAMS: That is quite true. We need also some specific implementation of these rights. I would like to suggest, as a

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[3] See Donald Pierson, *Negroes in Brazil* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), for a discussion of this subject.

[4] Carey McWilliams, *Brothers under the Skin* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1943).

matter of fact, the necessity for some new federal legislation—a strengthening of the Fair Employment Practices Committee and perhaps the adoption of a new federal civil rights' statute.[5]

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[5] ". . . . Our first assignment, therefore, is to establish the principle that, *as a matter of national policy*, there shall be no discrimination against individuals because of race, color, creed, or country of national origin. Such a statement seems innocuous; but it is the crux of the matter. For once such a national policy has been proclaimed (and we have already attempted to do so), then it can be implemented in a limitless variety of ways. It can be made applicable to every concern from which the government purchases so much as a single lead pencil. To implement such a policy is merely to enforce the declarations in the constitution. . . . . To assist in the development of such a policy, a Congressional committee of inquiry should be created to investigate the whole problem of colored minorities in the United States. The scope of the inquiry should be broad and all-inclusive; it should not be limited to any one group or to any particular area. . . . . The first step which Congress should take is to enforce—to implement—the rights guaranteed by the Constitution. This action should take the form of re-enacting a new federal civil-rights statute. . . . . To end . . . . despotisms of bigotry, an all-inclusive federal civil-rights statute should be adopted. It should, moreover, be termed, not a civil rights statute, but a Fair Racial Practice Act. In method and procedure, it should follow the pattern of the National Labor Relations Act; and its enforcement should be delegated to a similar administrative agency. . . . . By the issuance of cease-and-desist orders, after the pattern of the Wagner Act, these unfair racial practices can be largely eliminated. . . . . There is clear constitutional warrant for such legislation. It could be justified both under the Fourteenth Amendment and under the interstate commerce clause. . . . .

"The creation of the FEPC [Fair Employment Practices Committee] unquestionably constitutes an extremely important precedent. This committee, as Dr. Malcolm S. MacLean has said, did more in the first eighty weeks of its existence to bring the Bill of Rights closer to reality than anything accomplished in the past eighty years. Negro employment increased in commercial shipyards from 6952 to 12,820; in navy shipyards from 6000 to 14,000; and in aircraft from 0 to 5000. This improvement has been accomplished, moreover, despite the fact that the FEPC has no legislative sanction; that it has no real powers of enforcement; and that not a single government order has been canceled since the committee was created. . . . . Despite the fact that the FEPC has 'not more than opened by a crack doors formerly barred to Negro workers,' it is being sabotaged in Washington. What has been accomplished, however, constitutes the clearest warrant for strengthening the FEPC, of providing it with effective remedies, giving it legislative sanction, and correlating its activities with some type of fair racial practice setup such as I have proposed . . . ." (*ibid.*).

Mr. Frazier: McWilliams, you do not think that a civil rights' law would do away with race prejudice and discrimination or segregation, do you?

Mr. McWilliams: I do not, but I believe that events are moving very rapidly in this world and that there is great merit in fighting for a legislative program. It is a form of mass education.

Mr. Redfield: I am a great believer in the value and the power of the facts themselves if they are only made known. I notice that you have had another suggestion in the program which at one time you published—the suggestion of establishing some federal agency with the duty of making the facts known to the people of the country.

Mr. McWilliams: That is true. I think that we should have a federal agency to make the facts known; that we should pass the measure to outlaw the poll tax; that we should remove the last vestige of racisms from our immigration laws; that we should enforce existing civil rights' statutes; and that we should also go in for federal action programs designed to lift the living standards of minority peoples in particular reference to housing, health, and education.

Mr. Redfield: Where is the point at which such a program can be carried out without producing an unfavorable reaction?

Mr. McWilliams: The point at which it fails to work—the point, in other words, at which such a program provokes more opposition than it achieves benefits.

Mr. Redfield: Wouldn't you say that there is a necessary relationship between public opinion and reform legislation? Public opinion has to be at a certain stage before the reform legislation will be of this beneficial character.

Mr. McWilliams: I agree with that, but I would like to ask Frazier what he thinks might be done at the local level.

Mr. Frazier: At the local level I think that we might organize citizens' committees.

MR. REDFIELD: What would they be like?

MR. FRAZIER: We might make up these committees of white and colored people and draw them from all classes in the community.

MR. REDFIELD: You must make some further explanation of them, it seems to me, Frazier, because a citizens' committee could or could not be a good thing. I have known committees that bore those names that were hardly more than vigilante organizations.

MR. FRAZIER: But I have indicated a way of meeting this difficulty by making them representative of all the classes in the communities. One of the weaknesses of our interracial committees has been that they have been drawn exclusively from professional and business groups. I am suggesting that we have labor leaders, labor groups—people who are in daily contact with members of these darker minorities.

MR. MCWILLIAMS: Also, what about adding schoolteachers and even bus-drivers and perhaps even a few newspaper editors?

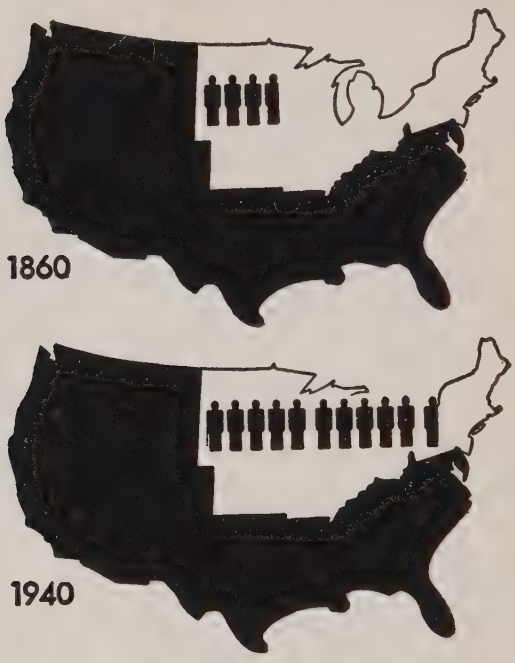
MR. FRAZIER: I would agree to that.

MR. REDFIELD: McWilliams, you have had experience with such a committee out on the Pacific Coast. I am sure that our audience would like to know what they, as citizens, if they are interested in the point of view we are representing here, could do about the situations that arise.

MR. MCWILLIAMS: There should be such citizens' committees, particularly in every defense area of the United States. There is much that they can do on the local level by improved police methods; by bringing policies of local government and local business and local labor relations in conformity with the national policy; by relieving local tensions; by developing action programs with respect to health and housing and education; and by fighting all types of discrimination in their local communities.

MR. REDFIELD: And, of course, by electing representatives who will carry out these policies.

THE NEGRO MOVES NORTH



Source: Public Affairs Committee, *op. cit.*

Mr. McWilliams: That is very true. I think, also, that we should recognize that the war presents an opportunity here as well as a responsibility. Don't you agree with that?

Mr. Redfield: It seems to me that that is the general drift of what we have been saying. Not only does the war present a situation of particular danger, but it also presents a situation of change. We can take advantage of that change and go forward in the direction which we believe to be wise.

Mr. Frazier: I would like to add another word. As I travel about the country, I see more than mere tension. I see white people and colored people learning to live together.

MR. MCWILLIAMS: I would say that action is education and that that is what we need in relation to this entire problem.

MR. REDFIELD: Gentlemen, in offering some words to sum up what we have declared today, I might remark that we have said something to explain race tension and that we have also said something about how the dangers of race violence might be reduced. We have a reasoned conviction that, although this is indeed a time of heightened race tension, its important causes lie in the circumstances of the war effort and in the long history of injustice toward the dark-skinned Americans.

But we also think that violence is, to a great degree, preventable. Violence is to be prevented by constructive effort to improve living conditions and to abolish race discrimination. We also seem to feel that race segregation is itself a wrong and that its end should be our common goal.

Finally, we seem to be in agreement that he who strives to make democratic America more truly democratic strives for the common good. In the words of a colleague of mine at the University of Chicago: "Democracy is not something that some people in the country can have and others not have—something to be shared and divided, like a pie, some getting a small piece and some getting a large piece. Democracy is an integral thing. If any part of the country has it, all parts have it. If any part of the country does not have it, the rest of the country does not have it. So, the Negro, or any other dark-skinned people or any white-skinned people, in fighting for democracy for himself fights the battle for all of us for democracy."

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What Do *You* Think?

1. In your opinion why have race tensions increased in the United States? Are racial-tension problems chiefly local or national? Is there a paradox in the fact that the racial problem is said to be national in character but that some local officials and communities entirely reject and resent any action taken by the federal government to help alleviate race tensions?

2. What changes have taken place in the racial relations within your community? What specific steps might be taken within your community to ease racial tensions?

3. Do you agree with Mr. Redfield that "there are no inferior races; there are only inferior opportunities"? Discuss.

4. In your opinion is racial segregation the only possible way within the United States that white and colored people can live together? What are the arguments for and against segregation?

5. Do you agree with Mr. McWilliams that "we should reaffirm our federal policy of no discrimination in order to bring practice into alliance with preachment in this country"?

6. Do you think that color is the unfinished business of democracy? In your opinion will America ever be able to close the gap between what is practiced and what is preached in regard to the minorities in a democracy? Discuss the minority problem in relation to the post-war problems of employment and political unity.

7. What steps should be taken by the national government to improve race relations and opportunities? Discuss the plan for the creation of a Fair Racial Practice Act designed on the principles of the National Labor Relations Act.

8. What is the relation between public opinion and reform legislation? What steps is American opinion ready to take? What steps is your community ready to take? Do other wartime changes offer the challenge of change in racial relations?

The People Say . . . .

The following letters are representative of the views expressed by the ROUND TABLE *audience on "Prices and Your Pocketbook," broadcast June 27, 1943.*

*

No "Excess Spending Power"

Permit me to register one well-meant criticism: How come that, to the last man, on this as on all other programs, there is the constant harping on "excess spending power," as though it were true of all classes. Is no voice ever to be raised for the thousands of us who have to count the pennies to make them stretch, living costs being what they are?

True—industrial workers, through dint of sweat and toil and long, nerve-straining hours, are paid a somewhat higher rate than formerly they could have demanded, but what of the office workers, clerks, and other thousands of white-collar workers who still lag painfully behind the ever ascending scale of living costs—those who earn $75, $80, $90, or even the affluent $100 or $125? (Frozen) And there are *plenty of them*, despite the fable of high salaries universally. . . . . I move that something be done to exclude these workers in the lower brackets from that category designated as having "excess spending power." Inflation will never stem from their excess spending power! They will do well to keep body and soul together if the cost of living continues to ascend, as doubtless it will.—*A listener from Los Angeles, California.*

Congress Should Act

I feel that Congress at present is too much in the mood of spite work and doing things that will affect the 1944 elections, which I do not think is patriotic. I was raised in North Dakota and have not been around much and have seen not over 10 states of this nation and never was abroad so that I may be less than the average citizen, but from here I feel that Congress must or should at once tackle the food problem. It should set prices from the farm to the consumer, starting most surely at the farm. It must get over the pussyfooting from pressure from the farm groups. If that issue once was settled and if food prices were stabilized on a basis that we consumers could depend upon, then the wage problem should come next. You cannot settle the wage problem unless food prices are set first. . . . .—*A listener from Billings, Montana.*

*

Inequities

For three years I have listened to discussions of prices and inflation, usually concluding that the only right answer is more drastic taxation (income or spending tax)—and I agree—but so far I have failed to hear a single discus-

sion go further to take up the obvious fact of the inequity to the man of fixed or declining income. Is there no answer? The economists should be able to figure out *some* technique that would be workable. They did it for the corporations, after a fashion, in the excess profits tax. . . . .—*A listener from Winnipesaukee, New Hampshire.*

*

Need More Taxes and Forced Savings

We are all aware that we have had inflation for more than a year, and we all do sincerely hope it will not get out of control. In fact, the thinking class fear that it might get out of bounds, and they are eager for some means of prevention, although they are not eager for more taxes; yet taxes and compulsion in the matter of savings are the only measures to combat further inflationary tendencies. . . . .—*A listener from Denver, Colorado.*

*

Limit Purchasing Power by Coupon

. . . . What would be the consequences or disadvantages of limiting purchasing power, by coupon, to a certain fixed amount per month? Such amount could take into consideration the cost of a decent and allowable standard of living. It would vary with age—and even with recent income, as indicated by income tax. It would be inclusive or exclusive of many non-rationed items. Thus it could take into consideration private obligations existing at the plan's inauguration, or it could be accompanied by a moratorium on many such obligations. In this way we might, to some extent, eat our cake and have it too. Persons would continue to earn their unequal rewards in the American way, while spending power would be curtailed. It would be, in effect, a forced savings. . . . .—*A listener from Clearfield, Utah.*

*

What about These?

. . . . Why is it that only the farmers' prices, the wages of labor, and the miners' pay envelope cause inflation? What about the movie actors, the $100,000 vice-presidents (corporation), the stockholders' dividends, the huge per annum salaries of management, and the like? How come that doesn't cause inflation? It just does not add up. . . . .—*A listener from Botkins, Ohio.*

*

We Will Pay

. . . . I have always said that because there are so many of my class we will fight this war; we will pay for this war; we will win this war; but we will not write the peace. . . . . I asked you a year or so ago if it were possible for a wealthy American to be patriotic and make sacrifices for his country. The Ruml plan is the answer. This was the biggest stab in the back my class ever got. . . . .—*A listener from Alexander, North Dakota.*

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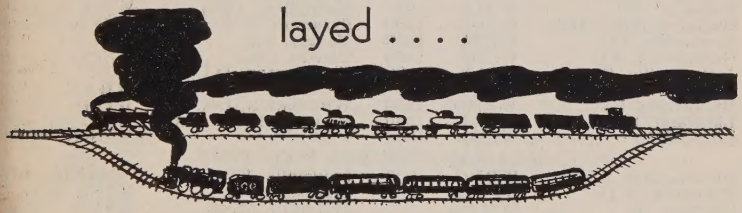

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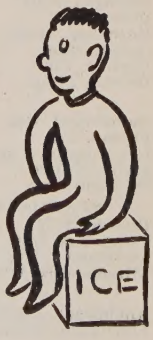

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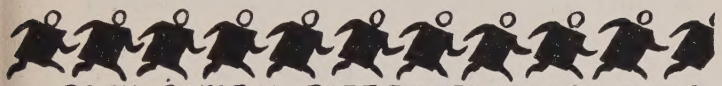

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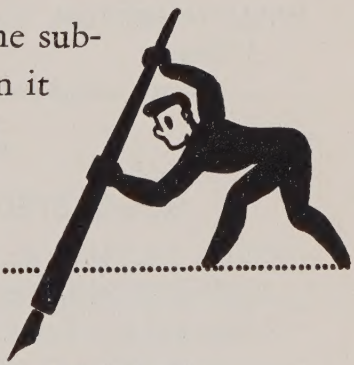

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JULY 11, 1943

CARTELS AND THE PEACE

•

HUGH COX, Assistant Attorney-General, in charge of the War Division of the Department of Justice

WILLIAM BENTON, Vice-President, University of Chicago

(THIRD PARTICIPANT TO BE ANNOUNCED)

•

SUGGESTED READINGS

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"No Peace with I. G. Farben," *Fortune*, September, 1942.

"Restoring Freedom," in "The United States in a New World," Part III, a supplement to *Fortune*, December, 1942.

"War and Peace and the Patent System," *Fortune*, August, 1942.

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